

dulously seized on any occasional verse, which seemed an echo of the sacred doctrines. No reader can exceed me in admiring the discriminative thought, the shrewd moral observation, the finished and felicitous execution, and the galaxy of poetical beauties, which combine to give a peculiar lustre to the writings of Pope. But I cannot refuse to perceive, that almost every allusion in his lighter works to the names, the facts, and the topics, that specially belong to the religion of Christ, is in a style and spirit of profane banter ; and that, in most of his graver ones, where he meant to be dignified, he took the utmost care to divest his thoughts of all the mean vulgarity of Christian associations. " Off, ye profane ! " might seem to have been his signal to all evangelical ideas, when he began his *Essay on Man*; and they were obedient, and fled ; for if you detach the detail and illustrations, so as to lay bare the outline and general principles of the work, it will stand confest an elaborate attempt to redeem the whole theory of the condition and interests of man, both in life and death, from all the explanations imposed on it by an unphilosophical revelation from heaven. And in the happy riddance of this despised though celestial light, it exhibits a sort of moon-light vision, of thin impalpable abstractions, at which a speculatist may gaze, with a dubious wonder whether they be realities or phantoms ; but which a practical man will in vain try to seize and turn to account ; and which an evangelical man will disdain to accept in exchange for those forms of truth which his religion brings to him as real living friends, instructors, and consolers ; which present themselves to him, at his return from a profitless adventure in that shadowy dreary region, with an effect like that of meeting the countenances of his affectionate domestic associates, on his awaking from the fantastic succession of vain efforts and perplexities, among strange objects, incidents, and people, in a bewildering dream.—But what deference to Christianity was to be expected, when such a man as Bolingbroke was the genius whose imparted splendour was to illuminate, and the demigod* whose approbation was to crown, the labours which,

* He is so named somewhere in Pope's Works. " In the conclusion," says Ur. Jokason, in *his* "Life of Pope," " it is sufficiently acknowledged